Risk Communication

STEC Infections Linked to Flour
Goals of Risk Communication

- Two goals:
  1. **Short term**: Warn about the outbreak and product recalls
  2. **Long term**: Change behavior
Short Term: Outbreak Warnings

More flour recalled after E. coli is found in flour sample. Do not eat raw dough or batter. Even tasting a small amount can make you sick. Check for recalled brands and don't use them: go.usa.gov/cSX45

General Mills flour recall consumer information

Raw cookie dough linked to General Mills flour recall and Ecoli outbreak
Short Term: Outbreak Warnings

- Numerous recalls
  - Different products
  - Multiple brand names
  - Message fatigue

- Storage of product
  - Many people move flour into a different container
  - May not remember what brand they purchased
Pack your pantry with fresh flour!
Long Term: Changing Consumer Behavior

- People weigh the risks and benefits of any behavior
  - **Risk**: “Could be contaminated and make me sick...”
  - **Benefit**: “...but it tastes really good.”

- Risk perception is often based on past experiences
  - “I’ve never gotten sick.”
  - “I always ate it growing up.”
  - “I don’t know anyone who’s gotten sick.”
Long Term: Changing Consumer Behavior

- Outbreak created awareness, but how to build on that?
  - Leverage existing communication channels
  - Holidays
  - Patient testimonial, etc.?